

House
3015 Dumbarton Avenue, N.W.
Washington (Georgetown)
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-183

HABS
DC
GEO
106-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

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HOUSE

Location: 3015 Dumbarton Avenue, N.W., (Georgetown), Washington, D.C.
The house is located on the north side of the Street
midway between 30th and 31st Street.

Present Owner: Edgar K. Thompson

Present Occupant: Same

Present Use: Private Residence

Statement of Significance: This two story house exhibits a unique combination of a Victorian front block added to an earlier wooden building. Although there is no secure dating for this earlier section, stylistic evidence indicates the late Federal period.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The building is located in Square 1242, lot 804 (formerly Square 72, the west half of lot 79 in Beall's addition to Georgetown). The following is an incomplete chain of title to the property. The references are to the Recorder of Deeds, Washington, D.C.

1794 Deed April 30, 1794, recorded July 12, 1794 in
Liber B folio 52
Richard Johns et ux Susannah
To
Samuel Davidson
William Craik
William Hammond Dorsey
(tenants in common)
All of lot 79

1797 Deed April 24, 1797, recorded September 12, 1797 in
Liber C folio 151
William Craik
William Hammond Dorsey
Samuel Davidson
To
Samuel Brooke

- 1814 Deed January 25, 1814, recorded May 5, 1814 in
Liber AG folio 362
Samuel Brooke
To
Joseph Brewer
- 1842 Deed September 7, 1842, recorded September 20, 1842 in
Liber WB 95 folio 122
John Marbury
To
Farmers and Mechanics Bank of Georgetown
Joseph Brewer by Deed of Trust, March 28, 1826 in
Liber WB 15 folio 368 was indebted to said bank
for \$2650 and in order to secure payment for debt,
conveyed the property to John Marbury. After twice
offering lots 87 and 88 on Beall Street and lot 79
on Dumbarton, Marbury sold the said lots in a
private sale to said Bank for \$1482.83.
- 1846 Deed July 18, 1846, recorded August 4, 1846 in
Liber WB 127 folio 88
President and Trustees of the Farmers and Mechanics
Bank
To
Walter Godey
West half of lot 79
Consideration: \$200.00
- Deed in Trust July 25, 1846, recorded August 4, 1846 in
Liber WB 127 folio 116
Walter Godey
To
Francis Dodge
West half of lot 79 on N. side of Dumbarton.
"...with all and singular the buildings, improve-
ments and appurtenances"
- 1868 Deed June 15, 1868, recorded June 16, 1868 in
Liber 560 folio 379
Walter Godey et ux Jane
To
George Casilear
Consideration: \$3100

- 1870 Deed June 4, 1870, recorded June 9, 1870 in
Liber 618 folio 2
George W. Casilear
To
Malcolm Seaton
Consideration: \$6500
- 1871 Deed June 19, 1871, recorded June 21, 1871 in
Liber 651 folio 8
Watkins Addison, Trustee
To
George W. Casilear
Sold for default under trust from Malcolm Seaton
Consideration: \$5100
- 1872 Deed December 20, 1872, recorded December 23, 1872 in
Liber 706 folio 133
George W. Casilear
To
David M. Cooper
- 1891 Deed November 13, 1891, recorded November 13, 1891 in
Liber 1628 folio 338
David M. Cooper, widower
To
John P. Taylor
Consideration: \$4000
- 1918 Deed April 25, 1918, recorded April 30, 1918 in
Liber 4064 folio 276
Alice M. Taylor, widow
Isabelle P. Taylor
William H. Taylor
To
Mary E. Graham
- 1922 Deed August 4, 1922, recorded August 15, 1922 in
Liber 4781 folio 279
Mary E. Graham
To
William W. C. Howard and wife May Mary
- 1929 Deed April 4, 1929, recorded April 3, 1929 in
Liber 6305 folio 244
William W. C. Howard
To
Grace C. Taylor

1942 Deed January 10, 1942, recorded February 12, 1942 in
Liber 7723 folio 137

Neill E. Bailey

To

Margaret H. Shire

1944 Deed January 21, 1944, recorded January 22, 1944 in
Liber 7932 folio 352

Albert C. Shire

To

Sylvia Miller

Deed January 24, 1944, recorded January 25, 1944 in
Liber 7933 folio 115

Sylvia Miller

To

Margaret Hatfield

1946 Deed November 10, 1946, recorded November 25, 1946 in
Liber 8361 folio 56

Margaret Hatfield

To

Captain Edgar K. Thompson, USN

2. Date of erection: The earliest mention of a building occurs in the Deed in Trust of July 25, 1846 (see page 2), although portions of the house appear to be slightly earlier.
3. Architect: Unknown
4. Original plans, construction, etc: None known
5. Alterations and additions: The 2 story kitchen addition is mid-20th Century
6. Important old views: None known

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

1. Washington City directories provide the following list of tenants:

1870	Malcolm Seaton, asst. examiner, Pat. Office, 90 Dumbarton
1872-92	David M. Cooper, engraver

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1893-1914	John P. Taylor, clerk
1915-16	vacant
1919-24	Dana H. Graham
1925-29	Wm. W. Howard
1930	vacant
1932	Henry Bell
1933-36	Edgar E. Hume
1937-40	Howard R. Tolley
1941-43	Albert Shire
1948	Captain Edgar K. Thompson, USN
1949	H. R. La Motte
1951-56	Walter S. Gabler
1956-58	Ambassador Paz
1958-	
present	Captain Edgar K. Thompson, USN

2. The Georgetown Assessments (National Archives, Microcopy 605, Group 351) provide the following information:

Roll 8 (1808-1812)

Samuel Brooke, Montgomery Co.

May 31, 1809	Daniel Bussard	lot 79	Beall's	\$300
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Roll 9 (1815)

Joseph Brewer

July 1, 1815	Samuel Brooke	lot 79	Beall's add.	
60 Dumb. vacant				\$500

Roll 11 (1818-1819)

Joseph Brewer

Lot 79 Beall's	60 Dumb. vacant	\$1,000
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Roll 12 (1865-70)

Walter Godey

W. part	lot 79 30' n. side Dumbarton 120' deep	\$750
Improvements	Two story frame dwelling	\$1,000

Because of the significant doubling of the assessment in 1818-1819 and the continuing of the same amount (\$1,000) through 1865-1870, it may be possible that some type of building did actually exist in 1818-1819. This could be the original structure to which the Victorian front was added.

Prepared by Ellen J. Schwartz
Architectural Historian
Commission of Fine Arts
August, 1968

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: 3015 Dumbarton Avenue exhibits a unique blend of elements of Federal and Victorian architecture. The elevation reveals components such as wood quoins and modillioned cornice which recall the early 19th century in close juxtaposition with Victorian features such as the bracketed cornice doorway or the large scaled 2/2 light sash. Even more fundamentally, plan development indicates that a Victorian street front (South) block was added to an existing early 19th century structure. In these ways the house is an atypical example of the direct physical fusion of early and mid-19th century concepts of domestic design.
2. Condition of fabric: Both the interior and the exterior of the dwelling are in good-excellent condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: This two story frame with basement faces South onto Dumbarton Avenue between 30th and 31st Streets with its West wall approximately 215' West of the centerline of 30th Street. The three bay facade is 23'6" in width and the depth of the house is approximately 65'.
2. Foundations: The Southern mid-19th century block of the house has a brick foundation wall exposed approximately 6' at the South elevation. The early 19th century portion has an uncoursed granite block foundation, and the foundation for the 20th century kitchen addition to the North is of brick.
3. Wall construction: The South elevation is covered with ship-lap siding painted gray; the corners of the facade are edged with wood quoins painted white. At the North and the East elevations siding is with wood clapboarding.
4. Framing: As visible in the basement, the wood framing of the central section of the first floor consists of 3" x 8" joists with one side rough hewn and the other

sawn. These joists run in an East -- West direction, those under the stairway walls are of 3" x 9" section. The members are notched to rest on the foundation wall. Joints between the joists and a North -- South crosspiece under the stairway are slotted and pinned with wood pegs.

5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: At the South elevation facade a cast iron stairway of nine risers ends in a narrow platform. The risers are geometric filagree panels and the stringers are also lightened with punched circular holes. A heavy mid-19th century cast iron tubular railing and six floral ornamental posts edge both sides of the stair and platform.

At the East elevation a long four bay wood porch extends approximately 34' to the North from the North wall of the front Victorian block. The porch is two stories in height and is fitted with Tuscan piers and simple railings of wood. Wood stairs of five risers each are located at the North end of the porch and at the North wall of the Victorian front block. This porch is probably of mid-19th century date.

Small ornamental mid-19th century iron balcony railings are placed at each of the two lower floor windows of the South facade.

6. Chimneys: The older central portion of the house has one chimney approximately 1'-8" x 3'-0" at the middle of the North wall and one approximately 1'-8" x 3'-0" in size at the center of the West wall of the parlor to the South of the stair hall. The Victorian block has one approximately 1'-8" x 3'-0" at the center of the West wall of the block. All have simple brick caps.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The front (South) elevation entry is fitted with a pair of 2' three panel doors with the top panel having a semicircular head. Above the doors is a single light rectangular transom.

The doorway is framed by vertical wood lesenes and topped by a projecting flat wood cornice supported by a modillioned band and a pair of finely detailed consoles.

The doorway to the basement at the West end of the South elevation is a mid-20th century alteration replacing an opening to a basement level garage of early 20th century date.

The East wall early 19th century entry doorway from the porch at the first floor of the central portion of the house has a simple framed opening with a 3'-0" wood four panel mid-19th century door with a two light transom above.

- b. Windows and shutters: In the Victorian South block the first floor windows are 2/4 light double-hung of standard height. Both sets of windows have wood sills and wood convex curve eared cornices with dentil band and small keystone block. At the South elevation the attic level is marked by three oval attic vents surrounded by a simple white painted wood band and with a grill consisting of a floral pattern wood cut-out. At both the first and second floors of the South elevation the windows have two panel horizontal louvered shutter painted deep royal blue. At the North elevation of the Victorian block there are three rectangular attic vents with horizontal louvers.

Windows in the Federal central portion are quite different from those in the front section and consist of 6/6 light double-hung sash at the East elevation of both first and second floors. These windows are fitted with wood one panel horizontal louvered shutters with 19th century metal shutter stops in place at the first floor level.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: At present the roof over the central and rear portions of the house pitches up from East to West to the party wall. The front block has a shed roof pitching up from North to the South facade in a gradual slope. The covering of both roofs is standing seam metal.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The Victorian block terminates in a rich modillioned wood cornice with a cyma-recta

corona. All downspouts and gutters are at the East side of the house and are of metal.

c. Cupolas, dormers, towers: None

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The plan consists of three basic units: a front (Southern) block with one large room on each floor and an East side stair hall; a central unit with East -- West stair hall between front (Southern) and rear (Northern) rooms; and thirdly, a 20th century two story addition at the North of the central block. In addition, a two story porch extends along the East side of the central block from the North wall of the front block.

On the first floor the front unit contains a living room connected to the front parlor of the central block by a wide opening. The rear (North) room of the central block is a dining room and a kitchen occupies the North addition.

The second floor contains a series of bedrooms; one at each side of the central stairway, one at the South block at three steps above the level of the central unit, and one in North end of the North addition. There are also two bathrooms; one at the Southeast corner of the front block, and one in the North addition at the North wall of the central block.

The basement consists of a large room under the central block, a room of the same floor elevation under the East half of the front block, and a room which had formerly been a garage at a 1'-8" lower floor level under the West half of the front block.

2. Stairways: The Victorian era stairway at the East side of the front block is an important sculptural feature of the house. The half turn 3'-1" wide stair ascends thirteen risers from South to North and back from the landing five risers to the second level. Curving elements of various scales dominate the details of the stair with the single sweep of the rounded fruitwood railing, turned balusters, a newel post with ring moldings, and stringer

appliqués in a floral curving pattern. Even the plan of the opening at the second level shows rounded corners.

The Federal era North - South stairway at the middle of the house is a major feature of the central block. It is also a half-turn stairway but is 2'-8" wide and ascends ten risers from East to West and back five risers from the landing to the second floor. The wood rail curves up to vertical at the beginning of the landing and then makes an angular direction turn to horizontal, to North and to East to the upper section of the rail. Details of the stair include simple rectangular balusters, sculptured wood newel posts with exaggerated entasis bulge, and simple curved wood angle appliques under each tread at the stringer board.

A stairway to the basement is located under the main staircase in the South block and is a straight run of ten risers.

3. Flooring: Painted wood flooring is used on the first and second floors and the basement has a concrete floor.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster walls are painted or wallpaper covered. Ceilings are plaster.
5. Doorways and doors: Doors in the Victorian (South) section of the house are heavy wood four and six panel types with a heavy wood projecting molding around each panel. Doors in the central block are of simple four panel type with no molded edge around each panel.

Although they are now removed there were formerly two 4' four panel wood sliding doors between the front and middle rooms of the first floor. These are stored in the basement.

6. Decorative features and trim: For the South portion of the house the second floor 19th century trim consists of a 4 1/2" wood molded door and window trim and an 8" molded top baseboard. The living room below contains 19th century trim including a 6" rounded edge door and window trim and a 9" molded cap baseboard.

Trim in the central portion of the house includes 2 1/2" door and window trim and a 4" baseboard with no molded cap. On the first floor what appears to be early 19th century trim includes a 6" wide window trim with upper corner 3" square wood blocks and a 3" deep three step under trim below the window stool. A simple molded top baseboard of probably 19th century date is 7" in height.

7. Notable hardware: Many of the doors have porcelain door-knobs of probably 19th century date and several of the windows in the central portion of the house have 19th century strap weight hangers.
8. Lighting: There are a variety of 20th century fixtures.
9. Heating: In the Victorian era South section of the house there are two fireplaces at the West wall of this block. The one at the second floor has a 5'-4" wood mantelpiece framed by 8" wide pilasters, has an 11' wide mantel shelf, and has an ogee arch over the fireplace opening.

The 5'-8" x 4'-0" high white marble mantelpiece in the living room below features a semicircular headed fireplace opening, and ornamental scroll keystone and a curving 10 1/2" mantel shelf. There are no pilasters at the sides but rather chamfered vertical corners.

The central section of the house has two fireplaces open on the first floor; one at the West wall of the South room and one at the North wall of the North room. Both have had their mantelpieces extensively altered in the 20th century. On the second floor both fireplaces above those on the first level have been blocked up.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: 3015 Dumbarton Avenue is in a residential area with single family homes, town houses and apartment buildings. It is abutted directly on the West by a three story brick structure but on the East there is an alleyway approximately 9' wide to the rear yard.

2. Enclosures: The rear yard is enclosed by a 4' stockade fence at the East and by brick walls 4' in height at the North and approximately 7' at the West.
3. Outbuildings: While there are at present no remains of an outbuilding to be seen, it is said by the current owner that remains of an outbuilding were uncovered in 1946. A brick foundation for a building approximately 20' in the East - West direction and approximately 8' wide was discovered along the North end of the lot.
4. Walks: There is a brick walk approximately 6' wide from the street to the rear yard along the East side of the house. The South elevation faces directly onto a brick public walk approximately 6' from the facade.
5. Landscaping: At the facade a fir tree stands West of the entry stairs.

The rear yard is edged at the North by a planting border of ivy and low shrubs.

Prepared by: William P. Thompson
Architect
Commission of Fine Arts
July, 1968